

****THIS IS A PROVISIONAL DRAFT: PLEASE REFER TO THE SYLLABUS ON NTULEARN ONCE THE SEMESTER BEGINS****

HL 1007: Classical Literature – Doing Things with the Classics

Instructor: Samara Cahill

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Meeting Time: Mondays, 2:30-4:30pm, and tutorials

Location: HSS Auditorium (and tutorial rooms)

Course Overview

This course will introduce students to major authors, genres, themes, narratives, tropes, and conventions of what is known as the “Western canon” while putting these classics in conversation with both classical texts from non-Western cultures and with adaptations. The course has three main goals: (1) To introduce students to foundational texts of Western and non-Western literature; (2) To question the canon (a set of authoritative or foundational texts) and canon formation (who decides what counts as “authoritative” or “foundational”?); (3) To practice *doing* things with these foundational texts, whether that “doing” is adaptation, interrogation, translation, comparison, cultural analysis, or creative work. Your instructor and tutors welcome feedback, questions, and suggestions. This course is about grappling with the classics while also having fun with them—it will give you tools for the scholarly toolbox that you will use throughout your time in university (and beyond). But you will only get out of the course what you put into it, so please let us know if you are confused about anything or if you have ideas for discussion points. If you find examples of contemporary or pop culture references to the classics that you think would be helpful to talk about in class—please email Prof. Sam!

Method of Instruction

Lectures: 2 hours per week

Tutorials: 1 hour per week

Texts

Most of the texts will be available on NTULearn. However, you will need to purchase the following:

- Margaret Atwood, *The Penelopiad*
- Vyasa (?), *Bhagavad Gita* (translated by Laurie L. Patton)
- Xie Shi Min, *Dragonhearted** (*NTU discounted copies (\$7.50) will be available for sale after Xie Shi Min’s talk at HSS, 17 August)

Course Assessment

Continuing Assessment: 50 %

Final Examination: 50 %

Continuing Assessment

Tutorial Presentation (10%) – These 10 minute presentations will be organized by your tutors.

Film Response (10%): This 500 word (lower limit) essay will be a response to a film of your choice included in the “Doing Things with the Classics” Film Series (This list is provisional: *Chi-Raq*; *The Legend of Bagger Vance*; *Journey to the West: Conquering the Demons*; *Queen*; *Percy Jackson & the Olympians: The Lightning Thief*). You must cite and quote at least one **published** film review using MLA format and include a Works Cited page. Please submit **hard copies** to your tutors by 5pm. **Due Date: End of Week 7.**

Final Essay (30%): This 1500 word (lower limit) essay will be written in response to a list of prompts distributed to the class during week 7. You must cite and quote at least one scholarly source and one other source (scholarly or not). Essay must be written in MLA format and include a Works Cited page. Please submit **hard copies** to your tutors by 5pm. **Due Date: End of Week 14 .**

****Warning: Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will result in automatic failure on the assignment****

Course Schedule

Origins

Week 1

Introductions, Syllabus, Canon Formation and Fanfic, Essay Writing/Plagiarism/MLA Overview

Week 2

Thomas C. Foster, *How To Read Literature Like a Professor*, Chapter 5; Excerpts from Edith Hamilton, *Mythology* (NTU Learn)

[Extra credit opportunity for the evening of Wednesday, 17 August—Black Box Theatre. Attend talk and book signing by NTU English alumna Xie Shi Min, author of *Dragonhearted* and write a one-paragraph response to her talk. Copies of *Dragonhearted* will be available for sale at an NTU discount.]

Week 3

Excerpts from John Leyden (trans.), *Malay Annals*; “10 Legends and Myths of Singapore” pdf; and Nadia Wright, “Sir Stamford Raffles - A Manufactured Hero?” article (NTU Learn)

Love and War

Week 4

Plato, *The Symposium* (NTULearn)

(in-class overview: How to write a persuasive academic essay; What is this thing called MLA, again? What is a “scholarly” source?)

Week 5

Vyasa (?), *Bhagavad Gita*

Week 6

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*; selection of Sappho’s lyric poetry (Fragment 16 and 44); Ovid, “Penelope to Ulysses,” from *Heroides* (NTULearn) (in-class practice: close reading)

Epic Journeys

Week 7

Excerpts from Wu Cheng’en, *Journey to the West* and Homer, *The Odyssey* (NTU Learn)

Week 8

Midterm Recess

Week 9

Xie Shi Min, *Dragonhearted*

Wisdom

Week 10

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*; “The Simile of the Cave,” from Plato, *The Republic* (NTULearn)

Week 11

Excerpts from Said’s and Fitzgerald’s translations of *The Ruba’iyat of Omar Khayyam* (NTULearn)

Trickster Figures

Week 12

Selection of tales from Africa, North America, and the Caribbean (NTULearn)

Adaptations

Week 13

Carol Ann Duffy, “Circe” and “Penelope,” from *The World’s Wife* (NTU Learn); Atwood, *The Penelopiad*

Week 14

Semester Review

